dertakings which appeared to him at one period almost impossible of attainment, and this owing to his having gained (I may say unconsciously) a greater degree of positive science.

Every work even appears to pass through an analogous progress, from the undefined mystical sketch, to its positive or finished condition: this is indeed consequent upon the law, —it is the visible image of mental evolution.

We shall now endeavour to explain on what we can depend for a fixed correspondence between cause and effect on mankind.

All knowledge is derived through the senses; if the mechanism of these be examined in thousands and hundreds of thousands of mankind, it would be found the same anatomical demonstration would suffice; this does not apply merely to the organs of sensation, but throughout the structure of man. If this were not the case it would be useless to write works on anatomy; the similarity of bones, muscles, arteries, nerves, &c., must convince every one who reflects, how much more men resemble one another than they differ. That which is variable is very superficial, but as the variable constitutes the individuality, we are necessitated to observe these slight variations to enable us to recognize one man from another.

So it is in all specific creations, but when it is not of importance to recognize individually, the great resemblance between each member of a species is paramount. All lilies appear very much alike at the first glance, yet when examined minutely no two are precisely similar. It is thus, too, that the casual observer remarks the great resemblance in a flock of sheep; yet this, which is evidently the most predominant idea, is entirely lost sight of by the shepherd, who is necessitated to observe wherein each one differs — consequently the variable becomes the chief object of his observation. In like manner, in our intercourse with society, we have to regard the peculiarities of men; it is only by dint of reflection we can divest ourselves of the notion that every man is entirely different in organization, and unsubjected to any influence in common with others,—although it is curious to find we must at some time or other have been impressed to the contrary, by frequently using the word man to express collectively mankind. It will therefore be a consequence of this predominant resemblance in organization, that the same cause must produce a predominant resemblance in its effect on men; the more particularly so, since the delicate organs by means of which we receive the greatest share of intelligence, vary in a considerably less degree than the grosser portions of our structure; indeed, were it not for this universal conformity, music could not exist, pictures would be useless, certitude impossible, and science impracticable.

All phenomena may be divided into two kinds—internal and external,—internal phenomena operating on sense within us; external phenomena operating on sense from without; the two constituting all the subjective phenomena of sensation. Sensation may be termed comprehensively the mirror of the world.

Art must be entirely imitative of phenomena operating on the senses; it ought therefore to obey laws as certain as those of any other branch of science, it being subject to precisely the same conditions; consequently he who best comprehends the laws of phenomena, has, if he adds thereto *the practical mechanism of imitation*, the greatest power of recombining and creating, after the example of the great archetype, Nature;—also of exercising the greatest influence in the world;—has the greatest claim to be honoured by mankind, and the right to the highest title of intellect—genius.

For who could be a greater genius than he who should know and be able to perform all things?

The artist, then, perceiving that he cannot effect any useful purpose without imitating nature, will have a just right to conclude the best means of comprehending the science of art will be by the deep study and understanding of the science of nature.

We will now briefly recapitulate:—We first stated our convictions in the possibility of a more scientific comprehension of art, supported by the opinions of Reynolds, examining in our progress Comte's "Law of Mental Evolution," to shew that the mind passes from the mysterious to the positive and defined in acquiring knowledge, and that it is equally applicable to art as to any other branch of human understanding. We then attempted to prove that a fixed correspondence between cause and effect in art, depended on the same law that all other branches of science have for their certitude, and that all knowledge of art is derived through the senses.

From which, it is hoped, this maxim may have been deduced, viz.: that the best means of arriving at excellence in art will be by the intimate understanding of nature; that is to say, the laws of the external world, and those of sensation;—if to this is also added the practical mechanism of imitation.

We will now in a few words consider the advantages of a scientific system.

All professions tenaciously cling to the complex and mysterious, long after the period has arrived when it is evident generalization and simplicity are essential as well as attainable. It imposes by magnifying the difficulties to be overcome; as it is perhaps considered, that any levelling of the irregularities of the great highway might increase the number of travellers; but this ice-bound feeling must thaw before the genial influence of science as it approaches the zenith.

One of the greatest misfortunes of art-education, at the present time, is the deficiency of traditional education; this is evidently an immense loss of time, as we lose the experience of others which might often save years of futile wandering in paths of error. And it ought to be the more imperative on this account, that every one should record to the best of his power the results of his experience: it would at once improve ourselves and advance others. I say improve, for it is astonishing the effect of attempting to record our own notions: it brings us to a clearer comprehension of things; it is not till this is done that we have any conception of the confused state of our ideas.

A recorded science must of necessity facilitate the mental evolutions of men, and may, in a great measure, supersede the necessity of tradition. The difficulty of multiplying written records in past ages, no doubt compelled the system of scholarship.

In the event of a complete system of art being established, it will form the basis of pure criticism, from which should the critic swerve, either through ignorance or interested motives, his delinquency must at once be detected; it would form, too, a safeguard against such impositions being attempted.

This paper is an introduction to an attempt of my own,—to form a system on the solid basis of science. It may at first bear the semblance of presumption, till it is recollected we often propose to ourselves early in life a plan which is to absorb a large share of attention in our future career.

Wherein it is true it will beget truth; where error exists let it be exposed and condemned; right will then be substituted for wrong. Indeed, I should have felt much more reluctant to occupy your time, had I not felt convinced that "the history of error, properly managed, often shortens the way to truth."

My efforts will not have been destitute of effect, if they have at all succeeded in strengthening the convictions of those who believe art may be practised on more fixed principles than at present, or that I have at all illustrated the sentiments of the poet, which he has thus concisely expressed:—

"Art is but nature, better understood."

W. Cave Thomas.

Government Contracts.—It seems that in all Government contracts, jobbing is inherent. To buy worthless goods in the dearest market is proverbial in these affairs. Whether the contractor is most at fault, or is victimised in his turn, by having to fee the Government underlings, or deems it a point of business to get us much as he can out of the ignorance of public men, is a matter that ought to undergo searching inquiry. It appears that the coals used by the royal squadron for the Scottish voyage, and which were "taken in" from the stores at Portsmouth, were the veriest rubbish that ever lumbered a shoeing smith's forge, producing more pounds of clinker than ounces of steam, and just as economical as chaff.—*Bristol Journal.*

ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTIONS

The distinctive characteristics in art of the age we live in should prove a subject for meditation neither devoid of profit nor interest, as tending to provoke comparisons with those of bygone days, to awaken energies dormant or inactive from force of circumstances, yet capable of high results if roused into action, and to promote a generous spirit of emulation and even exertion, without which art must ever languish, and eventually retrograde.

The scholar, the amateur, the man of taste, the refined observer of passing events, will derive a satisfaction from the alternate contemplation of the past and the present, unknown to the unreflecting many; he will ponder over the crumbling monuments of nations long since extinct, examine their various features and traits of difference as developed in successive ages; follow the progress of the arts from infancy to maturity, from maturity to decline, with gladness see them revive and bloom again, more beautiful than ever, trace their progress down to his own time, and with judgment matured by study and reflection, scrutinize its leading features, and see what claim it will have to the admiration or gratitude of posterity.

It may not be too much to assert that by their architecture the various nations of the earth present a record of their former greatness or character, far more convincing, far more lasting than either of its sister arts can effect. It is by their architectural remains that mighty empires, long since passed away, exhibit to the beholder the history of their power and greatness, stamped in characters so imposing and striking, that doubt vanishes on the instant, and wonder and admiration alone remain.

The imperishable ruins of the mighty cities of Assyria,—the gigantic pyramids of Egypt,—the stupendous excavations of Elephanta and Ellora,—the richly decorated yet barbarous pagoda of the Hindoo and later mosque of the Mogul dynasty,—the singular ruins of ancient Mexico,—the classic portico and open temple of Greece,—the foundations of the Saturnian cities of Latium and Etruria that flourished ere Rome existed,—the high-arched aqueduct, the columned forum and vast amphitheatre of Rome herself,—her vast remains throughout Italy, Spain, Africa, Asia Minor, Gaul, and Germany,—the site of ancient Tyre,—the spot where Carthage stood,—the Greek church of Byzantium, type of unnumbered styles,—the Alhambra, wondrous relic of the Spanish Moor,—the gilded cupola and clustered semi-dome of the Turk,—the lofty minaret and burnished crescent of the Persian,—the Norman portal, ponderous but grand,—the pointed arch, the clustered column and matchless tracery of the Gothic style, the adopted of all countries, yet still preserving a character peculiar to each;—these, and many such as these, unnamed, are histories of ages past, written in characters legible to all who have learnt to read them.

If, then, the erection of churches for the Christian and temples for the Pagan, of palaces for their monarchs and trophies for their warriors, of theatres for their sports, and senate houses for their statesmen, in short, of all those buildings wherein man is wont to lavish his wealth and taste—be an outlet for the riches and a vehicle for the display of power and taste with great nations, how natural is it, when they no longer exist, to deduce our notions of their resources and power from their architectural remains, and how beautiful must be the study that consists in collecting, classifying, and comparing the knowledge thereby derived, and seeing wherein we ourselves excel or fall short of the specimens that are our models for imitation.

For the past, the testimony of the civilised world has been given; the verdict of universal approval has been pronounced; dates and periods, styles and orders, have been arranged definitively and finally; and a beautiful progression of harmonious changes established quite satisfactory and conclusive. For the future, the curtain has yet to be withdrawn, our merits or demerits have to receive the judgment of posterity, and our position and rank in the annals of art cannot be distinctly ascertained until the lapse of time shall have shed that halo of antiquity over our works and

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